

# MUSIC AT CONVOCAATION HALL

PRESENTS

Joseph Lambert Massart and his Time

Guillaume Tardif, violin

Roger Admiral, piano

Saturday, January 28, 2012 at 8 pm

Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building



## Joseph Lambert Massart and his Time

Joseph Lambert Massart was born in Liège, Belgium on July 19, 1811, at a time when Niccolò Paganini was starting his European career. Despite evidence of early talent, Director Luigi Cherubini could not admit young Massart as a foreigner at the state-sponsored Conservatoire de Paris; so he pursued private instruction with Rodolphe Kreutzer. At age 32, he was, however, given a professorship at the same Conservatory and his tenure would last a remarkable 47 years.

A born teacher, Massart formed a long list of orchestra musicians and soloists, and among them were names that young violinists of today might still recognize: Fritz Kreisler, Franz Ries, Eugène Ysaÿe, Pablo Sarasate, Julius Conus, Teresina Tua, Henri Wieniawski, and many others. Many of these students became leading teachers wherever they established themselves, and so did their students (from Russia to Canada, actually). If Massart did not maintain a soloist's profile, he still enjoyed playing chamber music concerts with his wife, pianist Louise Marson. He died in Paris on February 13, 1892, at age 80.

Paradoxically, the name of Massart is rarely mentioned nowadays, and many violinists will have never collected and connected enough historical information about violinists and composers of the 19th-century to see the remarkable web of relationships that existed during this rich period of culture and creativity. Our humble effort today is to create a panorama of the Franco-Belgian era, another 'golden age' of the violin. This period is approximately delineated by the emergence of two technologies: the Tourte bow on one hand (c.1785), and the sound recording on the other (c. 1905). The Franco-Belgian legacy is however still visible in the playing of many contemporary violinists.



*Etudes no. 2, 8, 11, 12, from 42 études*  
*Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831)*

A foundational set of short pieces for learning the basic techniques of the instruments (violin and bow), published 1796 and used ever since – here with an embellishing accompaniment. The second etude is usually a platform to learn various strokes; the eighth has challenging string crossing patterns; the eleventh focuses on smooth shifting; and the twelfth is an etude of ascending arpeggios in a bravura manner. Versailles-born Kreutzer was one of Europe's finest violinists. Beethoven dedicated his 9th sonata five years after first meeting the composer in Vienna in 1798 (the work was however only played later by his student, Massart – Kreutzer did not like or 'understand' it).

Kreutzer taught at the Paris Conservatoire from its foundation in 1795 until 1826, and co-authored the Conservatoire's famous *Methode de Violon* with Pierre Rode and Pierre Baillot (both students of Viotti, who also influenced Kreutzer). Kreutzer was involved with the Paris Opera, and for it wrote some 40 operas and 19 violin concertos. Massart was taught by Kreutzer.

*Rondo Russe, from the 2nd violin concerto in B minor*  
*Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802-1870)*

The Belgian component of the Franco-Belgian school starts with de Bériot, a violinist and composer of some 10 concerti and various pieces and studies (over 123 opus numbers). Born in Leuven, and trained by pupils of Viotti and Viotti himself, he was highly influenced by Paganini. He toured Europe and apparently even ventured to China. De Bériot lived with and finally married opera singer Maria Malibran (their son became an important piano teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, training Ravel and Granados among others). After Malibran's death from falling off a horse, de Bériot lived in Brussels, playing little in public. Declining the offer to succeed Baillot at the Paris Conservatoire, he instead established the violin studio at the Brussels Conservatory and retired in 1852, victim of developing blindness and paralysis. Among his students were Hubert Léonard, Henri Vieuxtemps and Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst.



*Grande Fantaisie*  
*on themes from 'Robert le Diable' by Meyerbeer op. 19*  
Alexandre Joseph Artôt (1815-1845)

We do know not much about Artôt's life and career, apart from the tours that brought him across Europe and the US, and for which he probably produced original arrangements on operatic arias like this one. He is mentioned as a serious competitor to Vieuxtemps and Léonard, and was praised for the delicacy of his playing. The *Fantaisie on Robert le Diable by Meyerbeer* reminds us of Massart's famous concert appearance with young Franz Liszt. It was reported that Massart was interrupted as he was starting the Beethoven 'Kreutzer' sonata by an audience noisily requesting Liszt's own version of 'Robert Le Diable' (the 1831 opera was one of the first grand operas, on a libretto by Eugene Scribe). The concert marked Massart's departure from the public scene, and his growing focus on teaching the next generation of virtuosi while enjoying chamber music with friends at home. The opera scenes selected by Artôt are alternately dramatic, lyrical, pastoral, virtuosic and exhilarating.

*Romance in F minor, for solo piano (to Désirée Artôt)*  
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Niece of Alexandre Artôt, singer Désirée Artôt also visited Russia and became Tchaikovsky's muse for a little while. She did upset the composer when she announced she was to marry a Spanish colleague singer (named de Padilla). This piece was written for the 'only woman' Tchaikovsky claimed he ever 'loved', and features two contrasting ideas, one more lyrical, one more rhythmic, to be later re-developed in other more familiar symphonic works.

*Rêverie et Caprice (to A. J. Artôt) - Romance op. 8 H. 88*  
Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

In this unique concert work for violin dedicated to his friend Artot, youthful Berlioz is reminiscent of Weber's 'Invitation to the Dance,' which Berlioz orchestrated in 1841 and quotes from his own opera Benvenuto Cellini. This version was prepared by Henri Marteau (1874-1934), a pupil of Léonard, who became professor in Geneva and then succeeded Joachim in Berlin. It is interesting to note that Berlioz was once rescued from heavy debt by Niccolò Paganini, who honoured his commission of a viola concerto (the 1834 *Harold in Italy*, never performed by Paganini) and called the composer 'the heir of Beethoven'.



*Etude Minute in F minor*  
Pierre Rode (1774-1830) arr. Jacques Thibaud (1880-1953)

Rode was Viotti's favorite pupil, and was often described as a milder and more refined Viotti. He also gained the favor of Napoleon and travelled to St. Petersburg and Moscow where he stayed a few years. Beethoven dedicated his 10th sonata to Rode, upon his visit to Vienna. His concertos are rarely played, though his 24 'Beethovenian' caprices are still used today (This is the 18th caprice, expertly harmonized by Thibaud, a violinist who reached superstar status in the first half of the 20th century).

*Capriccio-Valse in E major op. 7*  
Henri Wieniawski (1835-1880)

Born in Lublin, Poland (then part of the Russian Empire), Wieniawski was at 8 a student of Massart at the Paris Conservatoire, graduating at 12. He toured with his brother pianist and started publishing at 14 years. Anton Rubinstein brought him to St. Petersburg to lead the Russian Musical Society's orchestra and string quartet and teach. Wieniawski then successfully toured with Rubinstein from 1872 to 1874 in the United States, and interrupted his travels to assist his friend Henri Vieuxtemps as violin professor at the Brussels Conservatoire in 1875. His own health also declined in Brussels, impacting his later touring project back to Russia, where he died. His successor in Russia was Leopold Auer, who trained the next generation of virtuosos (Elman, Heifetz, and others). Immediately following his *Souvenir de Moscow* (op. 6), the *Capriccio-Valse* features Wieniawski's elegant technique, one that is perfectly suited to the salon atmosphere (with a few touches of his unique staccato stroke).

Intermission

*Brindisi, Valse op. 49*  
Jean-Delphin Alard (1815-1888)

A pupil of Habeneck and Fetis, successor to Baillot (to the disappointment of Dancla who hoped to succeed his teacher) Alard was a long-standing colleague of Massart at the Conservatoire (he taught from 1843 to 1875), and son in law of luthier Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume. He wrote 'Ecole du Violon', adopted by the Conservatoire curriculum, and invested important efforts in collecting violin repertoire from the previous century. His most important student was Pablo de Sarasate. This piece is elegant, pointed, and eminently violinistic.



*Zapateado, Spanish Dance op. 23 no. 2*  
Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908)

Leaving Pampeluna for Madrid, and then for Paris (thanks to a royal scholarship), Sarasate entered the Alard violin studio at 12 and obtained his first prize at 17. Sarasate's fast and continuous vibrato is often attributed to the influence of Massart. He delighted audiences with recitals and solo appearances with orchestra, contributing a colourful portfolio of lively pieces showcasing his brilliant technique, pleasing tunes and Spanish dance forms (such as the this Mexican-inspired Zapateado, which focuses on the rattling sounds of heels).

Furthermore, Sarasate was dedicatee of many masterworks by Saint-Saëns, Bruch, Lalo, and many others. He apparently briefly took on the teacher's hat as well later in life: one of his students was Montreal-born Alfred de Sève, who came back to Canada and worked for a while as founder/concertmaster of the Boston Symphony, before joining the McGill faculty.

*Ballade et Polonaise in G major op. 38*  
Henri Vieuxtemps (1820-1881)

Apart from his 4th and 5th concertos, the *Ballade and Polonaise in G major* is one of Vieuxtemps' most recognized compositions, reminiscent of his friends Schumann and Ludwig Spohr (an important contemporary violinist and composer). Schumann was quick to compare the young Vieuxtemps to Paganini, whom Vieuxtemps finally met in 1834 on the occasion of Paganini's London debut. The Belgian protégé of de Beriot spent time at the Conservatoire in Paris as well, collaborated with Malibran's sister, Pauline Viardot, and pursued composition studies that served him well. He soon had performed across Europe, spent five years in Russia as soloist for the court of czar Nicholas I and started the violin studio at the St. Petersburg conservatory (the original Russian school was Franco-Belgian!).

In 1871, Vieuxtemps was lured back to Brussels to teach at the Conservatoire, and taught Eugène Ysaÿe, Sam Franko, Emil Sauret, César Thomson, among others. Afflicted by paralysis, he was assisted by another of his favorite students and colleague, Henryk Wieniawski, until he moved to Algeria's more desirable climates.



*Paraphrase "Les Mots du Coeur" after J. T. Radoux, op. 16*  
Ovide Musin (1854-1929)

Ovide Musin was born in the vicinity of Liège and died in New York City. He entered the Liège Conservatoire at 9 under Heynberg, and shared at 13 the second prize with Ysaÿe, and thereafter earned the first prize and gold medal. His classmates included Martin Marsick and César Thomson (and the four of them were often ready for pranks!). He then met and entered the class of Léonard, who had fled Paris because of the Franco-German war. He soon became the concertmaster of Singelee's orchestra, and met Wieniawski, who encouraged him. Léonard helped Musin enter the Parisian society, where he met composers and writers such as Saint-Saëns, who gave him his op. 62 Morceau de Concert (the equivalent of a 4th Violin Concerto).

The violinist embarked on far-reaching tours (reaching Asian and Australia), married in New York the daughter of a Supreme Court judge, and came back to his ailing mother in Liège (also taking charge of Thomson's violin class). After her death, he went back to Newark to take care of his Musin violin school, managed by one of his pupils.

During his tours, Musin would write anecdotes and observations, later collected and self-published as *My Memoirs*, in 1920. His catalogue of works is nearly forgotten today, as is Théodore Radoux' (1835 – 1911), a Belgian composer and bassoonist born in Liège. Radoux in 1856 became professor of bassoon at the Conservatoire de Liège, and then was appointed director in 1872, a post that he held until his death almost 40 years later. Radoux wrote 'Henri Vieuxtemps: His Life and Works) (1891).

*Caprice Viennois op. 2*  
"Fritz" Kreisler (1875-1962)

Friedrich Kreisler, a prodigy, was a student in Vienna first and then in Paris, in the studios of Massart, Massenet and Delibes (for composition). His virtuoso-yet-sensitive style of playing and his ingenious skills at 'retouching' or 'recomposing' older works often reflected a 'gemuchtlich' (cosy) musicality that delighted audiences around the world and made his fortune. Massart was quoted saying: "Wieniawski had a great career, but I expect that Kreisler's will even surpass it". This caprice showcases the best elements of Kreisler's melodic talent and his irresistible "joie de vivre".



*Passacaglia after Handel*  
César Thomson (1857-1931)

A student of Dupuis and Massart, but also Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, and Léonard, César Thomson was by age 16 acclaimed as the holder of the world's best violin technique, a claim that can be verified in many of his highly original compositions. He became attached to the service of a private orchestra and resolved to build a castle in Lugano, Switzerland. He then became professor at the Liège Conservatory, and succeeded Ysaÿe at the Bruxelles Conservatory in 1897. Later on, he was appointed to Ithaca College and Juilliard School in the United States. His students include Johann Halvorsen (the author of a more familiar version of this work, set as a string duet), Paul Kochanski, and the Flonzaley Quartet.

*Waves at Play*  
Edwin Grasse (1884-1954)

Born in NYC and blind from infancy, Edwin Grasse studied with César Thomson in Brussels and earned the highest awards there before returning to NYC where he regularly performed in Carnegie Hall, Steinway Hall and Town Hall, as violinist or organist. This short piece was composed in 1914. Many of his compositions are still awaiting revival.

*Caprice*  
*after the 'Etude en forme de Valse' by Saint-Saëns (op. 52)*  
Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931)

Another great violinist born in Liège, Belgium, Eugène Ysaÿe was a giant in his day, and the revered friend of many artists and composers. Following studies with Wieniawski and Vieuxtemps, he became concertmaster of the Bilse Orchestra, predecessor of the Berlin Philharmonic. At 28, he was appointed professor at the Brussels conservatory and appeared at the popular Concerts Colonne in Paris, which launched a touring career as soloist. He was offered the conducting post at the NY Philharmonic but declined in 1898, however opted for conducting the Cincinnati orchestra in 1918 when health problems stopped his concertizing. Debussy, Franck and Chausson dedicated him famous works. He taught Joseph Gingold, William Primrose, Nathan Milstein, Louis Persinger, Mathieu Crickboom, Jascha Brodsky, and many others. Saint-Saëns' *Etude en forme de Valse* is the last of 6 etudes for piano (1877).



Canadian violinist **Guillaume Tardif** trained at the Eastman School (DMA) and the Conservatoire du Quebec (Premier Prix). He regularly embarks on recital tours and appeared as soloist with orchestras in Asia, Europe, South and North America – recently at Carnegie Hall, performing *Paganini's 24 Caprices*. His playing of standard repertoire, lesser-known repertoire and original compositions has often been broadcast on radio and TV networks, and his recordings have been issued on the Dell'Arco label.

Guillaume Tardif is Associate Professor of violin and Area Coordinator for Strings and Chamber Music at the Department of Music, University of Alberta. He has been a guest professor at various universities and conservatories, and was recently named a visiting professor at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. He manages a chamber concert series as leader of the Enterprise String Quartet and is president of the Alberta String Association. Various granting agencies have supported his research and community initiatives.

Canadian pianist **Roger Admiral** performs solo and chamber music repertoire spanning the 18th through the 21st century. Known for his dedication to contemporary music, Roger has commissioned and premiered many new compositions. He also performs as part of Kovalis Duo with Montreal percussionist Philip Hornsey. Roger lives in Camrose, Alberta.

Roger studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto), University of Western Ontario, and the University of Alberta (where he graduated with a Doctor of Music degree). His main teachers were Virginia Blaha, Peter Smith, Arthur Rowe, and Helmut Brauss.

Recent performances include recitals with baritone Nathan Berg at Lincoln Center (New York City), contralto Marie-Nicole Lemieux at Symphony Under the Sky (Edmonton), violinist Ilya Kaler at Convocation Hall (Edmonton), violinist Guillaume Tardif at Carnegie Hall (New York City), and with New Music Concerts conducted by Robert Aitken (Toronto). Currently, he coaches contemporary chamber music at the University of Alberta.



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